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Loving Remembrance

OF

THE LATE

**T**homas **S**hortreed

WHO DIED AT

TORONTO

June 23rd, A. D. 1886.

“The memory of the just is blessed.”

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# IN MEMORIAM.



## Thomas Shortreed.



THE following brief biographical sketch is printed, with the accompanying memorial address and resolution of condolence, as a loving tribute to the memory of Mr. Thomas Shortreed, whose sudden removal by death on Wednesday, June 23rd, 1886, cast a gloom over the several communities in which he was intimately known, and filled all hearts with profound sorrow because of the greatness of the loss sustained, and with deep sympathy for the grief-stricken widow and fatherless children.

Thomas Shortreed was the eldest son of Mr. John Shortreed, a native of Hawick, Scotland, and Margaret Hood, a native of Peebles, who emigrated to Canada in 1832 and 1833 respectively, and after their marriage in 1834, settled near the city (then the village) of Guelph where they still live on the old homestead. There the subject of this brief memorial was born on the

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23rd of April, 1837. In the midst of healthful rural scenes he grew to be a man of stalwart frame and great physical strength, and as the eldest son in a family of twelve children he did very much to assist his parents in converting their forest farm into a rich and beautiful home.

Being endowed with rare mechanical ingenuity and also with extraordinary administrative and executive ability, he was naturally qualified for conducting extensive industrial enterprises. About the age of thirty he embarked in the lumber business in the township of Esquesing, County of Halton, Ontario, not far from the town of Milton. Though a stranger in that community he soon won the confidence and esteem of all with whom he came in contact; his strict integrity, genial nature, commanding presence and modest, manly bearing always entitling him to the highest respect. In the course of a few years, by his enterprise and industry he reaped a rich financial return which was but the beginning of the success which attended all his subsequent undertakings. In 1871 he took into partnership with him Mr. Robert Laidlaw, son of the late Mr. Walter Laidlaw of Esquesing. Having purchased extensive timber limits in the county of Simcoe, both partners removed to Barrie, Ontario, from which, as a centre, the well known firm of "Shortreed & Laidlaw"



carried on their extensive lumbering and other interests for nearly fifteen years. As citizens of Barrie both members of the firm took an active interest and a prominent part in everything pertaining to the welfare of the community. Mr. Shortreed was the founder and main promoter of the Barrie Gas Company, and on the 12th of April, 1887, the shareholders of the company placed on record the following tribute to his memory :

“ Moved by H. H. Strathy, seconded by Judge Ardagh, and resolved : That at this, their first meeting since the removal by death of Mr. Thos. Shortreed, the shareholders of this Company desire to place on record their sincere and heartfelt regret at the loss they have thus sustained, recognizing him as the founder and promoter of the Company, and one who by his advice and co-operation rendered invaluable assistance in carrying on the work of the Company ; and that the secretary be requested to convey to Mrs. Shortreed a copy of this resolution.”

In 1878 the Presbyterian congregation of Barrie showed their appreciation of the worth of Mr. Shortreed by choosing him to serve as a ruling elder in the church. The unqualified confidence uniformly reposed in the firm of which he was the head, by all with whom they had financial dealings, was a like testimony to the



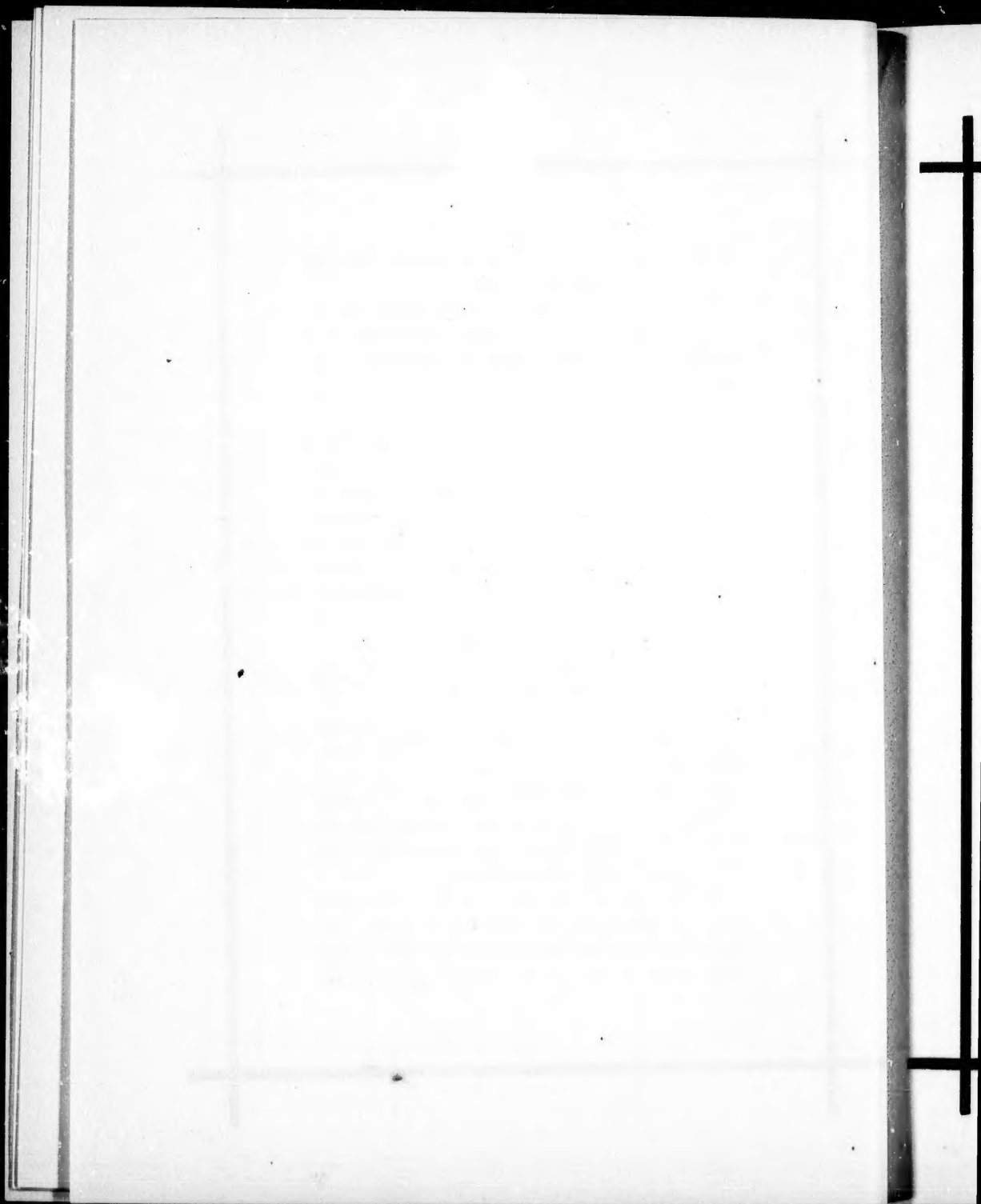


high esteem in which both he and his partner were held in business circles.

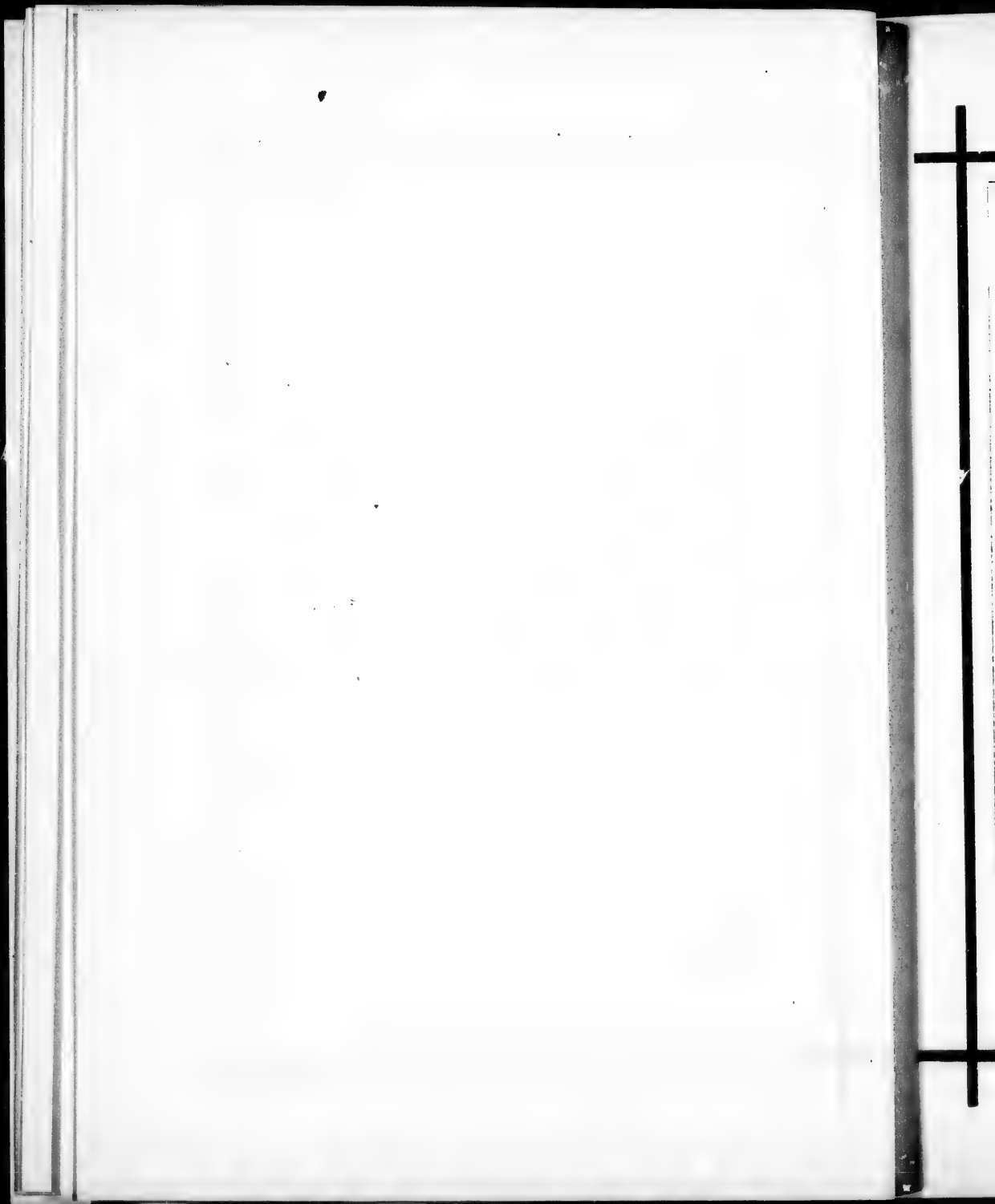
In 1884, having exhausted their timber limits, and finding the need of wider scope than the neighborhood of Barrie afforded, attracted by the growth and demands of the city of Toronto, in company with Mr. Thomas Murray of St. Catharines, with whom Mr. Shortreed had been associated in a lumbering enterprise in the state of Michigan, they bought large quarries on Pelee Island, and a wharf and yards at Toronto where they erected a mill with derricks and all necessary appliances of the most improved kind for the handling and manufacturing of the largest stones, and successfully established the business known as the "Toronto Stone Company."

Mr. Shortreed did not take up his residence in Toronto until the spring of 1886. The handsome residence purchased by him on Jarvis street was occupied by his family only three short weeks before the occurrence of the sad event which, but for the noble memory it is their privilege to cherish, and the strong christian hopes that sustain them, must have completely overwhelmed them with sorrow.

On the 23rd of June Mr. Shortreed had gone down to his place of business as usual, and was superintending the removal of some of the great stones in the yard. While giving direc-



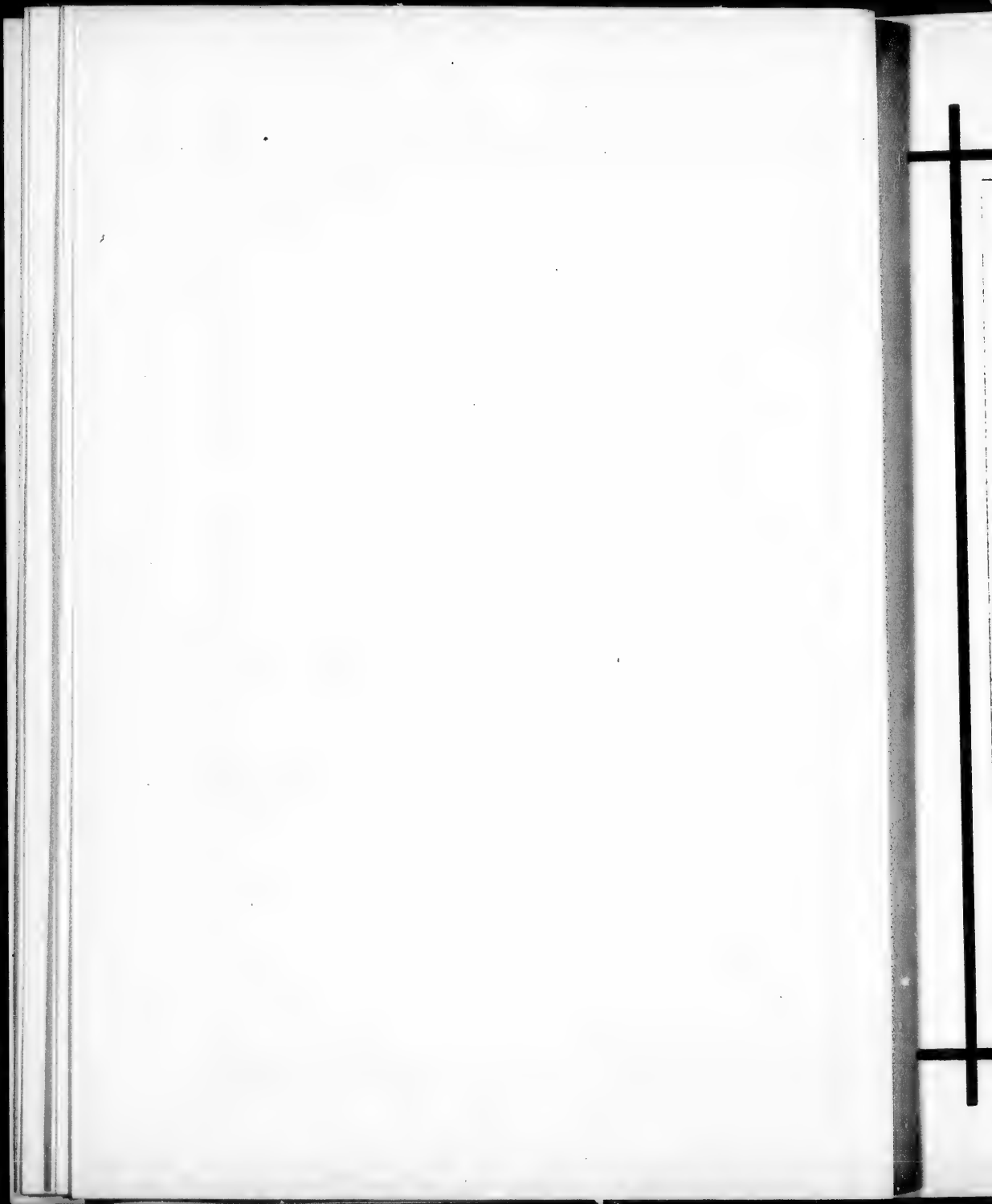
tions to the engineer he saw that the derrick, which was fifty feet in height, was about to fall. He instantly warned the workmen of their danger and was pointing them to positions of safety. During his busy life he had often been in the midst of danger but his quick perception never failed him, so that he always escaped unhurt; but on this occasion, in his anxiety for the safety of others he had not fully considered his own position, and as the derrick fell, the guy rope which extended a distance of over two hundred feet from the top of the derrick to a point away beyond and behind him, caught him and threw him forward with great force. In a moment eager hearts rushed to his rescue and loving hands were extended to raise him up, but only the lifeless form was there—the spirit had fled. It was a sad duty Mr. Laidlaw had to perform to carry the mournful tidings to the devoted wife and children whose happy circle the affectionate husband and father had left well and strong but a few hours before. But in their hour of bewildering grief that stricken household—bereaved indeed—were enabled to hear the Saviour's voice calling to them through the darkness, "It is I, be not afraid," and sweet consolation they found in His precious promises, often recalled to their memory by sympathizing friends, who bore



touching testimony to the truth of the words "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it."

The funeral took place on Friday afternoon. Rev. D. D. McLeod, of Barrie, conducted the service. There were present also Rev. P. McF. McLeod, Rev. G. M. Milligan, Rev. W. Burns and Rev. R. Wallace, all of Toronto, and Rev. R. J. Beattie, of Guelph, who had accompanied the father and mother of Mr. Shortreed on their sad journey to Toronto. Besides those from Toronto, many mourners were present from Barrie, Guelph, Hamilton and other places.

Many beautiful tributes have been paid to the worth of the late Thomas Shortreed, but one of the tenderest is the manifest sense of bereavement felt by those who were most intimately associated with him in his business life, and the touching testimony they bear to the nobility of his character. During the fifteen years of the existence of the firm of "Shortreed & Laidlaw" the two partners were called upon to advise with one another regarding many perplexing business matters, the adjustment of which must often have subjected character to the severest test; and the division and disposal of the abundant profits of their various enterprises would alone have proved too great a strain upon some relationships, yet between these two friends no



unpleasantness ever arose, and the testimony of the survivor of them is, that his noble companion never once spoke harshly, nor uttered a single unkind word.

The surviving members of Mr. Shortreed's family are his beloved wife Mary Pettinger—to whom he was married on the first of January, 1868—two daughters and one son. Dare we intrude upon the sacredness of that Christian home, we could disclose, as reflected in the lives of those who were nearest and dearest to him, a still more beautiful testimony to the happy influence of Mr. Shortreed's presence and example while he lived, and the not less blessed influence of his memory now that he is gone.

“He past ; a soul of nobler tone :  
My spirit loved and loves him yet.”

R. J. L.







## Estimate of Mr. Shortreed's Character

TAKEN FROM THE

### MEMORIAL SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BARRIE, ON SABBATH  
EVENING, 27TH JUNE, 1886, BY REV. D D McLEOD,

FROM JOB. 17, 11 :

*"My days are past, my purposes are broken off,  
even the thoughts of my heart."*

AFTER unfolding the meaning of the text  
and setting forth the lessons it teaches,  
Mr. McLeod spoke as follows :

These reflections, as you are aware, have  
been suggested by the very sudden and dis-  
tressing death of our late friend and fellow-  
member, Mr. Shortreed. That death was a  
painful shock and surprise to us and to the  
whole community. It was fitted to make us  
pause in our work, and reflect anew on the un-  
certainty of human life. Such deaths by acci-  
dent, as we call it, are, alas, by no means  
uncommon events. Every day almost brings its  
sad record of similar painful and sorrowful in-  
cidents. Men, the most useful and active of  
the world's workers, smitten down at their post  
through some failure of the machinery they are  
engaged with. Death was lurking nearer to

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them than they had dreamt in the midst of their activities. This death of Mr. Shortreed has come home to us with more than usual pain and sorrow, because of the relation in which he stood to the congregation.

We all knew him familiarly, and entertained for him a high respect. For many years he had gone out and in among us. Always actively engaged, always cheerful, kindly, obliging. And no intelligent person having opportunity of coming into contact with him could fail to recognise that he was a man possessed of strong and attractive elements of character. It is not, then, merely the suddenness of his death, and the melancholy circumstances attending it, which render it worthy of special comment, but it is the fact that in losing Mr. Shortreed we have lost from our midst a man of exceptional gifts and character, one whose place cannot be easily filled. His having but recently left his former home here in Barrie, entered as it were on a new chapter in his life, seeing before him large opportunities of activity and usefulness, and having made every preparation for carrying on his work, ready to take possession of the new and beautiful home he had provided for his family, and then being called away by death in so sudden and distressing a manner—these circumstances have made us feel his removal more



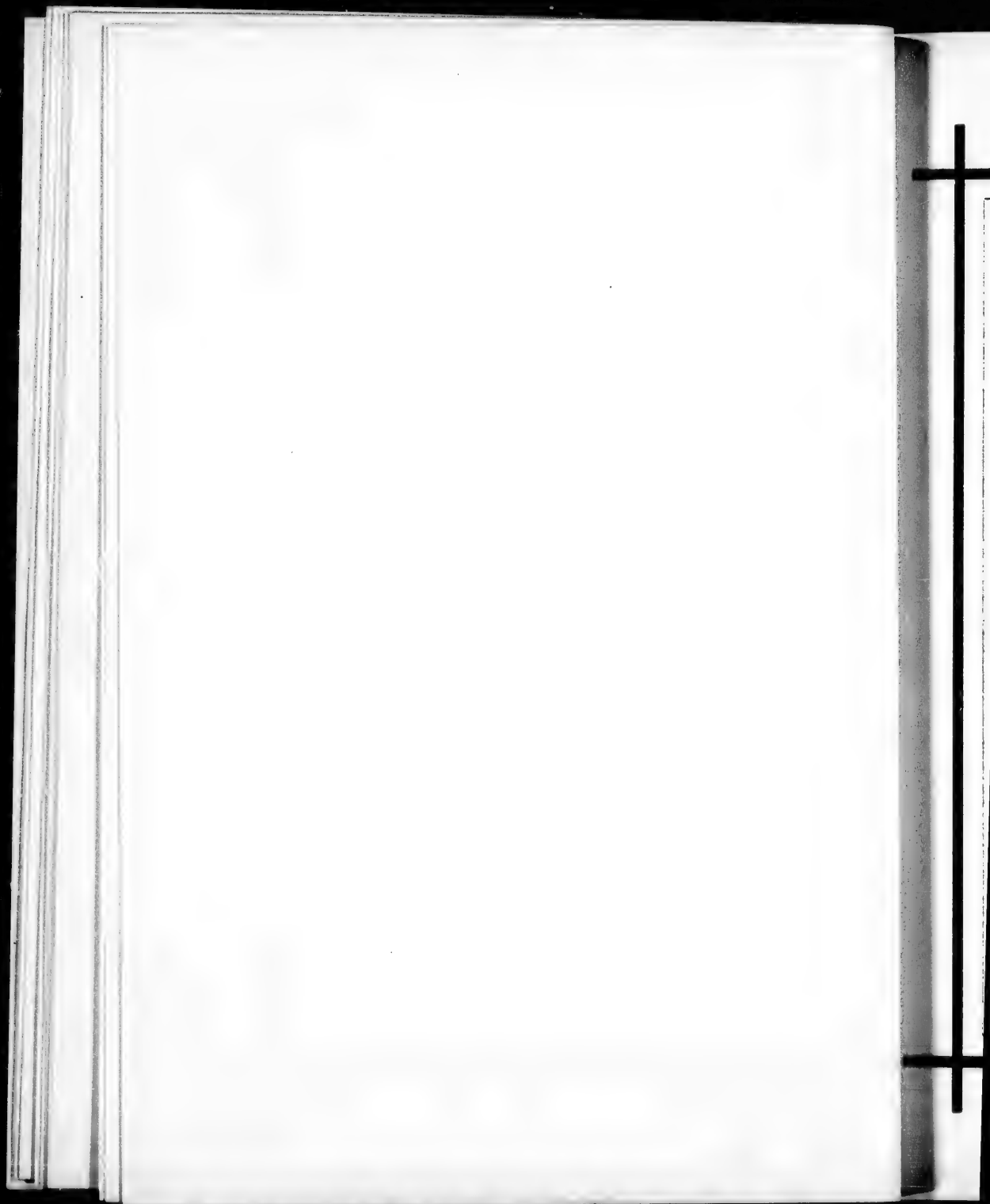
keenly, and awakened our deepest sympathy for his sorrowing family. He thought his work was about to begin in the city to which he had gone, while in the judgment of his Heavenly Father his work was already done. And yet he was in the very midst of his days. He might naturally have looked forward to enjoying many years of life. But it was with him as it is with many; his day of work was not to be prolonged until the evening. Many of us are only to have but a brief forenoon for our life's work. Let no one count on the evening of old age, however strong they may be. Our work may soon be completed, our opportunity at an end. We know not what a day nor an hour may bring forth. Even though our departed friend would not have us say much about him on this occasion, could we have had an opportunity to speak with him before his end, it would not be right to let this opportunity pass without endeavoring to recall his character and estimate the loss we have sustained in his removal. Mr. Shortreed was a man who had a thorough contempt for anything like boasting or display. He was not taken with appearances, and his keen searching eye could very quickly detect anything like mere pretentiousness or empty profession. None more than he, therefore, would dislike the use of language having the least exaggeration in it, in regard to himself. He



was one of those, of whom there are many in this country, who set out in his earlier years without much in the way of capital, but in a spirit of manly independence, with determined resolution, and sound principles of conduct, to hew out for himself a place and home in the world.

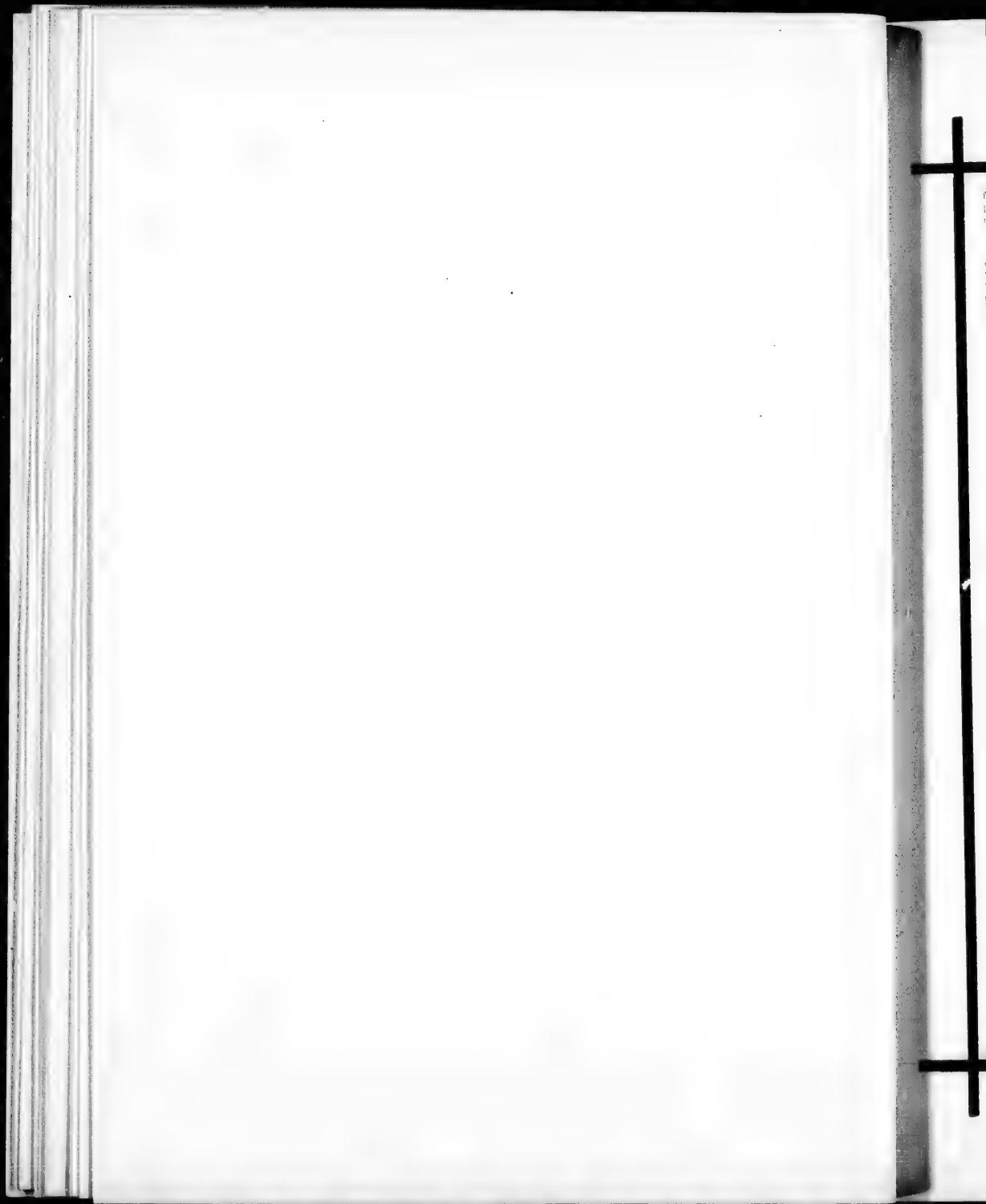
He brought to that work many elements of character which contributed to his success. What he became he owed entirely to his own industry. And his course teaches that lesson that is taught in many a Canadian home, and by the career of many an honoured citizen, that in this, our country, there is a prospect held out of honorable independence to every young man who is willing to work with energy and perseverance. But our departed friend was not only a man of work who threw himself into whatever he had in hand with the utmost energy, but he was a man endowed with more than ordinary mental ability. He was a man of sound and clear understanding and judgment. Those who were associated with him in business have felt this. And his large endowments in this direction not only necessarily contributed to his success in life, but made his advice always of value and led him to be sought and relied upon by others for counsel.

One long united with him in his industrial enterprises has remarked, that it was only to one so associated with him, his commanding ability could





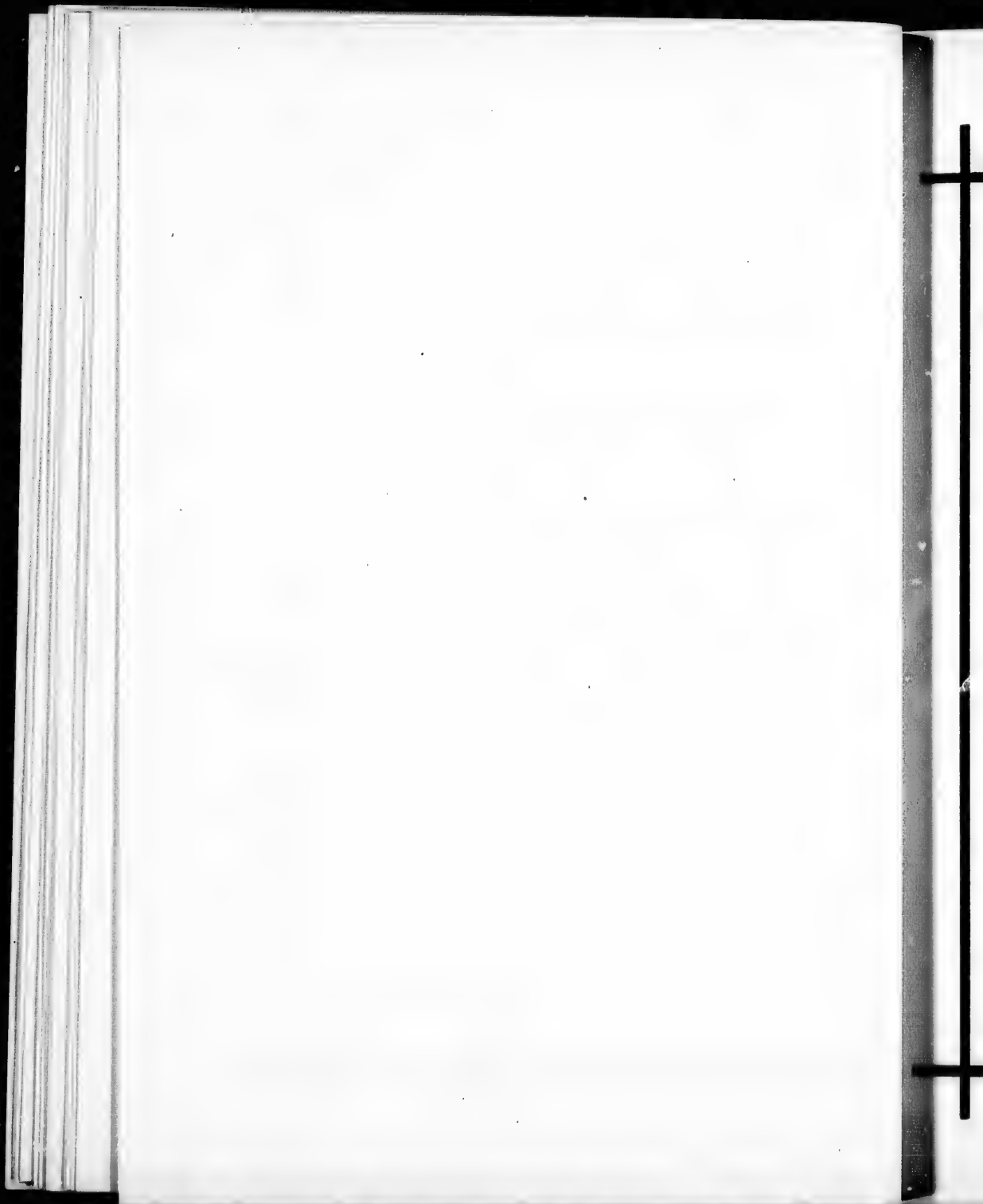
be properly known. He was not daunted by difficulty, danger or misfortune. Hopeful and energetic, when disaster came, there was no indulgence in needless complaining, he cheerfully took whatever measures the occasion demanded. Thus with resolute will, with large intelligence, with persevering industry, he worked out for himself a place of usefulness and influence, and reached a position of comfortable independence in the world. The clearness and breadth of view which Mr. Shortreed brought to the subjects he had to deal with was akin to genius. The obstacles he encountered seemed to yield before his resolute will and his intelligent manner of dealing with them. One could not but admire the calm, cheerful, determined spirit in which he carried on his large and difficult undertakings; and, had it pleased God to spare his life in the city to which he had gone, his grasp of mind and his unbending integrity could not have failed to receive still wider public recognition. He was the last to seek honor from men. But such a mind and character as he possessed could not be kept in the background in any circle he was in. But before the larger sphere to which he had moved was permitted to know his value, it pleased God to call him to the higher activities of the life beyond. But it was more as a friend, and in the social relations of life, that we had to do with



Mr. Shortreed, and I have no doubt I would be accused of exaggeration were I to describe as I found them, the features of his character in this relation.

Everyone who knew him, knew how modest and retiring he was in disposition so that the many finer features of his character were not discovered until you had the opportunity of enjoying the intercourse of an intimate friendship. Then you could not but be attracted by his genial kindliness, his gentleness of spirit, his manly generosity of sentiment, his sympathy, his sparkling humor, his genuineness and truthfulness of character. As he became known, he invariably gained upon the esteem and affection of his friends, and the better he was known the more he was trusted and loved. He was one you could resort to in the day of trouble, and trust in for sympathy and counsel. We have many acquaintances in life, but few whom we can regard as friends, reliable in all circumstances, friends who will be true to you and stand by you in all the changing experiences of life. Such a friend was he whose death we mourn to-day.

A friend whose kindly and manly intelligent countenance will be long mourned in every circle where he was known, and whose intrinsic worth and nobility of character will cause his memory to be long cherished with affection and respect.

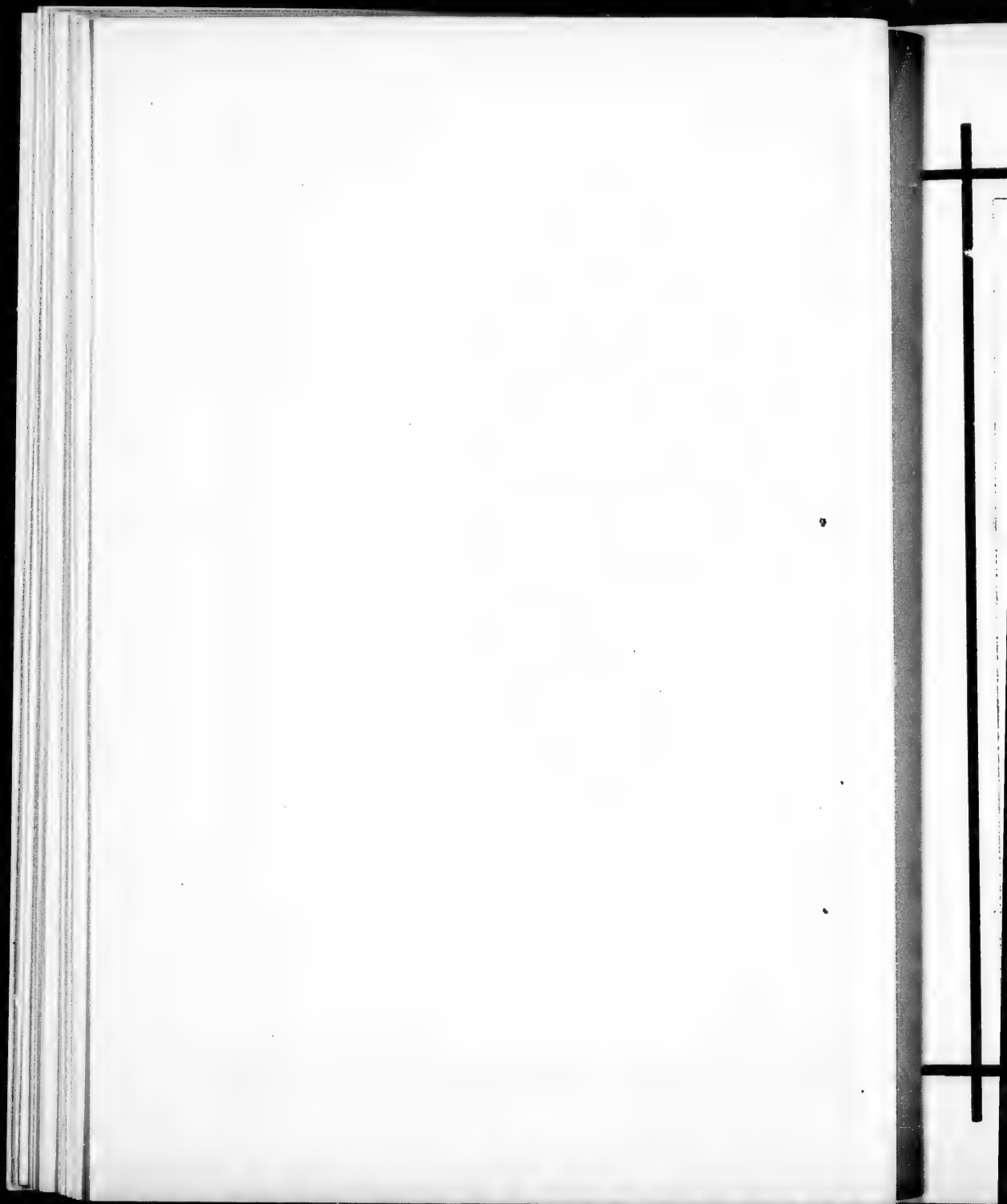


There was most happily mingled in him that sobriety of speech and behavior which becomes the christian man, with a most genial and keen humor which lighted up his conversation with anecdote and incident, that while provoking mirth, illustrated the point in hand. He could always enforce his argument with a flash of wit. And if it were necessary to rebuke meanness or fraud attempted towards him, no one could with more scathing epigram confound and silence the unfortunate person against whom his indignation was turned. His power of quiet sarcasm was often used with effect to silence or rebuke folly. But to indulge this was by no means habitual. The more amiable elements of his character were those which gave the tone to all his conduct and conversation. It is not necessary that I should speak of the departed in regard to the other relations of life. As a son, and husband, and father, he was beloved and faithful, and in his death his aged parents, his wife and children alone know the greatness of the loss they have sustained.

But that which interests us still more, speaking of him here in the house of God, is the question of his religious life. Diligence and success in worldly business do not suffice as a ground of hope for eternity. And here also it is to be remembered that the most difficult part of a man's



life to speak of is the religious element in it Here we may be most easily mistaken, and grievously misjudge our brother. I desire to speak in such a way as to avoid either making too much or too little of the religious aspect of our friend's life. This we can say in regard to him, that he was a man that had the fear of God in his heart, and endeavored to keep His commandments. He could not take that public part in religious service, which many trained in a different school can take. But he had sincerely at heart the prosperity of the Church of Christ He contributed liberally to the cause of religion God gives to every man his own peculiar gift. What to one man is easy and natural, to another is a very great difficulty and burden. The grace of God can no doubt overcome every difficulty of situation or training or disposition. But that grace is experienced in different degrees, and in a different way in different natures There was no service Mr Shortreed could render to the cause of religion in harmony with his quiet nature and retiring disposition that he would not most willingly render. He would at any time devote a day to visiting families in the congregation, or to any other service asked of him that he could be useful in And in everything we desired to do for the cause of Christ in the congregation we had his warmest sympathy and support. He was one





who stood loyally by his church and his pastor. Never absent morning or evening from his place in the house of God, and in this day of change when many inducements are held out to the members of our church to forsake their own place of worship, this steadfast, consistent support is of very great value to the minister of the gospel, and of great service to the Church. In his walk and conversation his conduct was consistent with his profession. One who worked by his side for many years has stated, that in these long years in every kind of trial, and under the greatest provocation he never heard our friend give way to passion or make use of language unbecoming his position. And one able to speak from a still longer and more intimate acquaintance with him in the family circle, has said that in all these years no rude nor unkind word was ever indulged in by him. There are few men of whom this can be said. And were I to speak of private conversations held with him on the subject of religion, I could testify further to the heartfelt interest he took in those great spiritual questions that concern our salvation. He was trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, and endeavoring to become further acquainted with the saving truth of the gospel. It is not the testimony of the dying hour that determines our eternal destiny. It is the spirit that animated the life. It is our



reliance on Jesus Christ showing its influence in our earnest endeavor to comply with His commands.

While, then, the sudden removal of our departed friend, and the painful manner of his death, cannot but be deeply mourned by his much loved family circle, and by all his friends, yet we can mingle thanksgiving with our tears, as we recall the worth of his character, and the hope we may cherish of meeting him in the better country. Even at the grave of husband and father and friend, so dark in one respect, there gather in the heart so many happy memories, so many pleasing reflections on what has been enjoyed in days gone by, that we cannot but acquiesce in the Divine will, and with mingled gratitude and grief, say with God's servant of old, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."





## RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE

WITH MRS. SHORTREED AND FAMILY,

PASSED AT A MEETING OF ELDERS AND MANAGERS OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BARRIE, JUNE 30TH, 1886.

**R**ESOLVED—That we the Session and Managers of the Presbyterian Church, Barrie, speaking both for ourselves, and as representing the congregation, desire to place on record our deep sense of the loss we have sustained, as well as the community at large, in the death of Mr. Shortreed, an Elder of this congregation. His recent connection with the congregation, as well as his well-known interest in its prosperity, made us feel, that though removed to another place, we still had in him a warm friend. We desire also to place on record our appreciation of his character as a christian man,—generous and active in his service of the church, and possessed of qualities which won the affection and admiration of all who knew him. We desire also in our own name, and in the name of the congregation, very specially to express our sympathy with Mrs. Shortreed and her family, as well as with his aged parents, and the other members of their family, in this very painful dispensation of Divine Providence, with



which they have been visited. We would assure Mrs. Shortreed, that the prayers of the congregation have been offered on her behalf, that she may be sustained and comforted under her bereavement, and that she may be enabled to bow with resignation to the Divine will in this very painful and unlooked for calamity that has come upon her. We trust that the very warm and widely expressed manifestations of sympathy elicited towards her, may be a source of comfort; as it must be a satisfaction to learn the very high estimation in which Mr. Shortreed was universally held, and to be assured that the influence of his life has all been on the side of that which is "worthy and of good report," and that his noble character, and honored name, will ever be held in affectionate remembrance by us, and by all who had the privilege of his acquaintance.

We would in conclusion, again commend the afflicted family to the care of our Heavenly Father, praying that He may watch over and protect them throughout their earthly pilgrimage, and when their work here is accomplished, may receive them into his Heavenly Kingdom.

Signed on behalf of the Session and Managers,

D. D. McLEOD, *Pastor.*

Barrie, June 30th, 1886.